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### UM conference addresses trust between tribes, researchers

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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April 10, 2008

**Contact:** Patty LaPlant, project coordinator, UM Division of Educational Research and Service, 406-243-5421

### **UM CONFERENCE ADDRESSES TRUST BETWEEN TRIBES, RESEARCHERS**

**MISSOULA —**

Value differences and a history of exploitation have created a critical need for dialogue between the traditional knowledge keepers of Indian Country and outside academicians and researchers.

Such discussions will be the focus of the first annual "Intersecting Interests: Tribal Knowledge and Research Communities" conference at The University of Montana April 15-17.

Patty LaPlant, project coordinator of UM's National Native Children's Trauma Center and a Blackfeet tribal member, said, "This conference will offer a wonderful neutral setting for the academic community and Native people to learn a lot from one another."

Academicians and researchers have conducted many studies in Indian Country that have led to negative consequences. Recently in Arizona, for example, the result was multimillion dollar lawsuit. Incidents such as these only enhance the distrust between tribes and universities across the nation.

"The goal of the 'Intersecting Interests' conference is to afford all stakeholders a common meeting ground to discuss the issues of indigenous research, data collection and data ownership," LaPlant said.



NNCTC principal investigator Rick van den Pol said, "Since we have been working with tribes throughout the nation, we have always operated under the invitation of the sovereign nation we are serving. This conference will help enhance understanding of the principles of appropriate and beneficial research for indigenous communities."

The conference will involve many prominent researchers and academicians from across the United States and Canada – particularly those who conduct studies with and among indigenous peoples. Speakers include Narcisse Blood and Ryan Heavy Head from Red Crow Community College of Canada's Blood reservation, as well as Sam Deloria, director of the American Indian Graduate Center in New Mexico, and Marie Battiste of the University of Saskatchewan, among many others.

"I am very excited about the learning opportunities that this conference provides," said Gyda Swaney a UM psychology professor. "As a member of the Salish and Kootenai tribe and a professor at UM, I have been involved in these issues for years, and it is good to see tribal nations and the University collaborating on such an important event."

The conference kicks off at 7 p.m. April 15 with a town hall meeting in the University Center. American Indian graduate students will present and discuss their experiences in graduate school. The conference is open to the public, with on-site registration offered each day. Registration costs \$175. One-day registration costs \$75. Students pay \$75 for the entire conference or a one-day rate of \$35.

For additional information visit <http://www.tribalknowledgegathering.org/> or call LaPlant at 406-243-5421.

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